FUTURE BUILDING
A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL WORK EXPERIENCE

BUILDUK
Leading the Construction Industry
INTRODUCTION

WHAT SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT WORK EXPERIENCE

WHAT INTERNS ARE TELLING US

TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

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USEFUL LINKS
Having a skilled and talented workforce is essential to the competitiveness of the construction industry - firms need ‘the right skills, in the right place, at the right time’.

With almost a fifth (17%) of those working in construction aged over 55 - the sector needs to develop the flow of young people into the industry to tackle skills shortages and deliver future projects.

Work experience can be a great way to give young people an initial taste of the industry, and provide a stepping-stone into longer term work or training.

This guide is designed to make it as easy as possible for Build UK members to provide work experience placements - building on the excellent work many will already be doing.
Improving the Image of Construction

Through the Build UK Image Leadership Group Main Contractors, Trade Associations and Specialist Contractors are working together to change young people’s perceptions of the industry and inspire them to pursue a career in construction. The Group contributes towards delivering the Build UK position on industry image:

Construction is a diverse sector which offers a huge range of job opportunities: anyone, whatever they want to be, can find a rewarding lifelong career. The industry needs to actively compete to recruit and retain a workforce capable of delivering the wide range of projects required across the UK.

Build UK will focus on inspiring young people and those looking for a change of career to choose construction whilst at the same time motivating the workforce to stay within the industry.
### Benefits of Work Experience

Providing great work experience requires some investment of time, but the prize is attracting more young people - some of whom may not have considered a career in construction - into the industry.

#### Benefits for young people
- The chance to find out more about a career in construction by shadowing or working alongside people in the industry
- An opportunity to build employability skills (communication, team-working etc)
- Getting first-hand experience of working conditions in a number of different environments

#### Benefits for the employer
- Provides an opportunity to show how construction involves interesting and fulfilling career options - changing the perception for many pupils, parents and teachers
- A way to look for future talent
- Supporting more young people into the industry - to tackle skills shortages
- Helping employees build mentoring skills
- Meeting contractual/planning or Section 106 commitments
Types of Work Experience this Guide Covers

This guide looks at two types of work experience:

1. **School-age**

   Defined as:

   - Students aged 16-19 (or under 16)
   - In full-time education
   - Placements no longer than two weeks
   - May have no specific career path in mind

2. **Internships**

   Defined as:

   - Young people - normally aged 19 and over
   - Probably studying at FE college or university
   - Likely to have construction in mind as a career path
   - Looking for longer placements during gap year or holidays – of between two weeks and three months

**Note:**
This guide does not cover sandwich year placements as part of degree courses; or any work experience which is an integral part of a specific course of study, for example TechBac.
WHAT SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT WORK EXPERIENCE

Feedback from schools
Class of Your Own surveyed schools about what they wanted from placements and the challenges they face.

Challenges for schools and students
- Finding placement employers
- Location of placement - has to be a reasonably short journey from home
- Placements that lack structure
- Students waiting for something to do
- Lack of feedback from employers
- Difficulty matching placements to students career interests

How employers can overcome these challenges
- Get in touch with the schools directly - don’t leave them to find you. Not all schools value intermediary organisations.
- Ensure structure and objectives for every placement
- Give students meaningful work - such as answering real customer calls
- Mentor the student but also leave them alone to deliver pieces of work
- Give feedback during the placement
- Complete feedback report - so that the school can continue to build on the placement

Best ages for school work experience
Schools find ages 14-15 and 16-17 best for work experience placements. At 14-15 it is not too late to influence a students’ career and subject choices; while 16-17 is “decision time” on what to do after they leave school.
WHAT INTERNS ARE TELLING US

Great internships are ones that:

- Are organised enough in advance to allow the intern to find accommodation
- Provide enough support for interns to pay for accommodation - if located away from the young person’s home
- Gives interesting and stretching work

- Feels meaningful to the intern - reports to senior managers, real technical challenges
- Is related to the intern’s course of study or interests
- Progressively develops the intern’s abilities, giving increasing responsibility
Good experiences

- Effort taken to learn about the student as an individual and what they want to gain from the placement
- Tasks assigned with the intern’s development in mind
- Placement contained real, interesting work mixed with development tasks to explore the company
- Opportunity to see theory applied in real life problems
- Chance to explore career options in the company
- Given responsibility
- Integral part of delivery team

Poor experiences

- Limited exposure to the variety of work in the company
- Insufficient work
- No responsibility
- Placement work unrelated to studies
- Not paid enough to rent accommodation when required
- Time spent on basic duties such as administration or carrying messages

www.ratemyplacement.co.uk
Rate My Placement is a website where students review their internships, and can be a useful source of information for employers.

Key messages from interns’ comments:
## 10 Top Tips for Employers

### For All Placements

1. Drive your placement programme, rather than react to individual applications.
2. Consider an interview process - only take students who are relatively keen.
3. Train your mentors - as a minimum, provide a briefing.
4. Start the placement with an objective setting session and skills/ability session.
5. Feedback halfway through the placement - give the student a real opportunity to improve.
6. Give feedback at the end of the placement.
7. Don’t underestimate young person’s abilities.
### TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

#### School-age Work Experience

### Case studies

**Balfour Beatty** use a private on-line application form for school-age work experience. When a student is recommended by a local manager, or has shown initiative by sending an email expressing interest, central HR sends a link to the form. This enables the company to have details of students and their CVs in a central database. Promising students are then offered further experience.

**BAM** have regional co-ordinators who manage the process locally, either using Construction Youth Trust’s workbook or using an in-house process. Placements happen throughout the year.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Partner specific schools rather than react to individual approaches</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Get the support of one of the school’s senior leadership team</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Brief the school’s work experience co-ordinator or teacher about your company and the range of work you do</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Prepare a structured project for the placement that has tangible outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Pay expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>Don’t just offer passive work-shadowing, get the student to interview your employees</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>Introduce the student to as wide a variety of roles as possible</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Treat students as employees - expect them to arrive on time, behave and dress as employees, stay for the full day etc.</td>
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Internships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Top Tips for Employers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recruit for placements as you would any other job</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Offer 1-3 month placements to enable the intern to see complex work through to delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interview for potential rather than for experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure high quality real work is available which will truly develop the intern’s skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Manage expectations by making clear what the intern will contribute, as well as highlighting whether there are any suitable job opportunities in your company</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interweave tasks for the student to complete, to stretch their experience of the company beyond the project</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pay at least the minimum wage</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Focus your energies on holiday periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Give a certificate or reference letter at the end</td>
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</table>
The checklists in this section are here to help employers plan a placement and tick-off key tasks.

Suggestions on what happens during the placement are detailed in the frameworks section which follows.
## School-age Work Experience

### Before

**Placement mentor or local work experience co-ordinator**

- [ ] Identify schools to target
- [ ] Discuss potential placement opportunities with the team
- [ ] Review risk assessments for chosen placements
- [ ] Visit chosen schools and discuss scope of work experience with school careers co-ordinators
- [ ] Get prospective students to complete a simple application form
- [ ] Interview students and select those who show some interest
- [ ] Send placement offer letter to the students’ schools
- [ ] Prepare timetable of activity using the placement framework
- [ ] Reserve computer or find space for the placement project
- [ ] Ensure that work experience risk assessment is complete and signed by parent/guardian
- [ ] Obtain photo permission if necessary
- [ ] Obtain any PPE required
- [ ] Brief the office staff about the students

### During

**Placement mentor**

- [ ] Meet the student to settle them in - they may be nervous
- [ ] Ensure office induction carried out and risk assessment has been explained
- [ ] Discuss and agree placement objectives with the student
- [ ] Ensure staff members are ready to give assistance
- [ ] Give the student your pre-prepared timetable and any contact numbers they might need
- [ ] Review and give feedback throughout the placement

### End

**Placement mentor or local work experience co-ordinator**

- [ ] Complete debrief with student, including evaluation forms
- [ ] Send evaluation forms/photos to the school and use them in publicity
Internships

Before
HR co-ordinator or placement manager

☐ Find real work suitable for undergraduate or school leaver
☐ Identify and train a mentor
☐ Write job description
☐ Advertise locally and on-line
☐ Select intern based on fit between student’s wishes and available placements
☐ Issue contract
☐ Brief manager on framework for internship - particularly mix of real work and placement tasks
☐ Arrange any training for specific tools or equipment

During
HR co-ordinator or placement manager

☐ Give induction information relevant to role - company structure, values, H&S
☐ Issue PPE if needed
☐ Give placement diary or handbook for logging learning
☐ Review progress at regular intervals based on placement framework
☐ Organise visits to other offices and support from other employees as necessary

Close
HR co-ordinator or placement manager

☐ Complete evaluation
☐ Organise closure meeting with manager, senior manager and student
Structured placements make a huge difference to success.

We know that great placements have objectives, a structure, meaningful work and frequent feedback. Here we provide some detailed frameworks you can use to structure placements - and adapt to fit the needs of your company.

Each company will choose the types of activities they can provide young people - in next section are some examples you can use.

Example activities:
- Estimating
- Site risk assessment
- Surveying
- Staff costing
School-age Work Experience - 1 Week Placement

The suggested framework is formed around a one-week placement and aims to give a great experience to student and employer. It does not specify a project activity - but refers generally to a ‘project’ throughout the timetable.

Some schools may want two week placements but this guide recommends one week - although it is for each employer to decide. It is a daunting experience for a young person and two weeks can place additional pressure on employer resources.

The framework refers to “interviews” at various points. In these sessions the student visits an employee whose work relates in some way to the project.

The student asks a series of questions about the employee’s role, what skills they use, how they got to where they are and how their role fits into the company.

We suggest four interviews over the course of a week.

Internship - 12 Weeks

An internship should, as far as possible, be composed of real work. An intern has almost certainly made career choices already and may be studying at university.

The framework combines this concept of real work with a number of “placement tasks” which aim to help the student appreciate the full range of roles needed to deliver a project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRE PLACEMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>SCHOOL ACTIVITY</strong></th>
<th><strong>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employer/careers advisor briefing - recommend careers advisor visit employer’s place of work if possible</td>
<td>Employer checks insurance and risk assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess students work skills, thinking style to match their personal strengths to placements</td>
<td>Employer/careers advisor briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students apply for a number of placements</td>
<td>Provide list of possible placement projects with job descriptions cross-referenced to school subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk assessments and parental permission obtained</td>
<td>Students are selected and interviewed by employer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Projects set up and mentors are briefed</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DAY 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>DAY 2</strong></th>
<th><strong>DAY 3</strong></th>
<th><strong>DAY 4</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>SCHOOL ACTIVITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome from mentor</td>
<td>Review objectives</td>
<td>Work experience co-ordinator visit</td>
<td>Project completes</td>
<td>Project completes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor talks through placement projects, sets objectives, general introduction</td>
<td>Project continues</td>
<td>Project continues</td>
<td>Presentation skills training</td>
<td>Presentation skills training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor gives industry overview - company roles</td>
<td>First project interview/coaching session</td>
<td>Interviews three and four</td>
<td>Project presentation to managers</td>
<td>Project presentation to managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student talks through what they expect to get from the experience - confirm project selection</td>
<td>Second project interview/coaching session</td>
<td>Mid-week objectives and behaviour review</td>
<td>Final feedback from mentor and from student</td>
<td>Final feedback from mentor and from student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project begins</td>
<td>Talk through interview findings with mentor</td>
<td>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</td>
<td>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</td>
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<th><strong>POST PLACEMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>SCHOOL ACTIVITY</strong></th>
<th><strong>EMPLOYER ACTIVITY</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six month review</td>
<td>Feedback sent back to school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Six month review to keep in touch with student and school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WEEK 1
- Mentor and student review progress daily
- Train tools and equipment provided, if needed
- Student starts work

## WEEK 2
- Mentor and student review progress daily

## WEEK 3
- Mentor and student formally review progress daily
- Talk with at least two people involved in business development

## WEEK 4
- Mentor and student formally review work (written) and mentor gives feedback
- Talk with at least two people involved in planning and designing projects

## WEEK 8
- Mentor and student formally review work (written) and mentor gives feedback
- Talk with at least two people involved in executing the project

## WEEK 12
- Mentor and student formally review work (written) and mentor gives feedback
- Talk with at least two people involved in project closure activities

### PLACEMENT TASK
- Map the workflow within the company from tender through to client handover - map departments and responsibilities
- Talk with at least two people involved in planning and designing projects
- Talk with at least two people involved in executing the project
- Talk with at least two people involved in project closure activities

### END OF PLACEMENT
- Student presents results of work to senior representative
- Student presents feedback about quality of placement and own learning to mentor
- Employer gives certificate or reference letter
Projects make the difference between moderate and great work experience.

Using a project designed to last a week enables the student to demonstrate all their skills and produce something tangible. It makes it easier for the mentor because the student is fully occupied and engaged.

This section refers to three options for projects.
This project can be carried out either with a group of students or by one student on their own.

The project is designed to open the students’ eyes to sustainability as applied to construction, to introduce a variety of interesting roles within the industry and to give the students something tangible to do with an output which might genuinely be useful to the company.

The student takes on the roles of different people within a building design project. The brief is to design a stand-alone Eco-Classroom for their school, and for the local community.

The Eco-Classroom is to be of use both to employees who want to act more sustainably and also to local people as a showcase or learning area.

The student will follow a design process, taking each role in turn and working with a professional to deliver each stage.

**Roles involved are:**
- Project Director/Construction Manager
- Facilities Manager
- Sustainability Officer
- Marketing/Brand Manager
- Surveyor
- Architect
- Engineering designer

There is no cost to run the project. A timetable and advice is available from Class of Your Own’s website, as well as workbooks and materials


**Contact:**
carole.teacher@classofyourown.com

[www.designengineerconstruct.com](http://www.designengineerconstruct.com)
Project 2

Student Studio

Student Studio offers support for work experience in the construction sector. It takes the burden out of offering work experience by providing a framework of activities to help employers structure students' time in the office.

Companies choose a sector-specific project from the project gallery that students can work through semi-autonomously during their placement. Each project encourages students to find out about real project work and to help develop workplace skills.

Students log on to the Student Studio website to access their own online work space where they can read project briefing information and record their experiences in a blog.

Similarly, supervisors can log on to the website to read daily suggestions for how to support the students that they are looking after.

Students have the opportunity to develop workplace skills in a well-structured way. When students wrap up their project at the end of the week, they will take away a detailed diary and presentation which they can use as evidence of their work experience.

There are a number of projects - examples include constructing a commercial office block, from the perspective of the construction management company; or to develop a design for a new footbridge to link London’s redeveloped Battersea Power Station site to the north bank of the Thames.

www.studentstudio.co.uk
Developed by employers and Construction Youth Trust through the “Employer Ownership of Skills” pilot, the course gives each learner an industry recognised certificate equivalent to an accredited qualification at Level 1 and Level 2.

Training is available to make certain that mentors are able to support the young people to ensure their success.

It is designed for young people coming from a wide range of backgrounds and academic levels and who have expressed an interest in the construction sector. Roles could range from entry level labourers up to trainee professionals.

The programme aims to show both the young people and employers that with the right support and an opportunity to demonstrate abilities, young people can become valuable employees.

The programme provides a workbook for the student to complete about subjects such as why health and safety is important and what health and safety practices are operating in their placement company.

The student also finds out what the company does, how it relates to its environment and how it is organised.

Lastly the programme involves a formal assessment of workplace skills by the employer. The employer has a guidance document to help them to supervise.

To find out more contact Construction Youth Trust

www.constructionyouth.org.uk
Insurance

Provided your insurer is a member of The Association of British Insurers (ABI) or Lloyd’s of London, you can treat work experience students as employees, covered by your Employers’ Liability policy.

**Up to two weeks**

Work experience of up to two weeks in duration will not adversely affect premiums.

**Longer than two weeks**

For placements of longer than two weeks, further information may have to be provided to your insurance company. ABI guidance makes clear:

“The Department for Education guidance for employers taking on work experience students gives more information about extended placements (See “Work Experience: A Guide for Employers”) Employers are advised to submit all the details set out in the form shown at Annex A of the guidance.

Even if the activity is likely to be recurring, it should be enough to inform the insurer on one occasion. There may be some adjustment to premiums, but it is still likely to be very small in relation to the overall size of the premium”.

In all instances if you are unsure, check with your insurer first.

**Further information:**

ABI guidance note  >

Ministerial letter of support on insurance  >
The HSE has reviewed its guidance on work experience with the aim of making it clearer and less bureaucratic for employers.

The HSE has made it clear that employers can use their existing arrangements for assessments and management of risks and they won’t need to be repeated for work experience students.

Controlling risk

Employers should consider that the student will lack experience, are likely to be unaware of existing or potential risks and/or may lack maturity, and that tasks may be beyond their physical or psychological capacity or involve risk of accidents that cannot reasonably be recognised or avoided by young people due to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training.

Employers are advised to adequately control any significant risks by:

- Explaining the risks during induction, checking that the student understands what they have been told and knows how to raise health and safety concerns
- Ensuring your checks are proportionate to the environment the student will be working and that reasonable adjustments have been made which reflect the ability and maturity of the young person

While young people can go on site, please check with your insurer to understand if they have any specific restrictions in place. There are legal restrictions making clear that children under 16 cannot carry out work (as part of work experience) exposing them to risks – for example, harmful exposure to toxic substances.
Health and Safety

Key points from the HSE guidance

- Use your existing arrangements for assessments and management of risks to young people
- If you have fewer than five employees you are not required to have a written risk assessment
- Avoid repeating your assessment of the risks if a new student is of a broadly similar level of maturity and understanding, and has no particular or additional needs (the organiser or parent should tell you if they have)
- If you do not currently employ a young person, have not done so in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, or one with particular needs, review your risk assessment before they start
- Placements in low-risk environments, such as offices or shops, with everyday risks that will mostly be familiar to the student, your existing arrangements for other employees should suffice

High risk environment - such as construction sites

- Consider what work the student will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed
- Satisfy yourself that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and that they work in practice
  
  (This will need to include additional induction, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment needed)

Further information:

HSE guidance pages on work experience >
HSE guidance on young people and the law >
Safeguarding

Over 16s

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are not needed for work experience involving students 16 years old and over.

Under 16s

A DBS check may be required for staff supervising work experience placements for students aged under 16, if they do so unsupervised and on a regular basis.

In these circumstances the member of staff would need an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

Full guidance is provided in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education).

This states that DBS checks are required for staff supervising under 16s on work experience if they do so:

- unsupervised
- and are
- providing the teaching/training/instruction frequently - at least once a week or on more than three days in a 30 day period, or overnight

Further information:

Keeping Children Safe in Education
Payment

Current minimum wage legislations makes clear there are certain types of work experience where the national minimum wage (NMW) does not have to be paid; however other areas are more a matter of judgment.

In particular the term ‘intern’ has no legal status under NMW law. Current rules make clear that NMW does not have to be paid to young people if they are:

- Students undertaking placements for less than 1 year as part of a UK-based further or higher education course
- Work experience students of compulsory school age, i.e. under 16
- Voluntary workers
- Work shadowing i.e. not undertaking work

School-age

Short 1-2 week placements should not be paid. Department for Education guidance makes clear that employers do not have to pay NMW to 16-19 year olds undertaking work experience as part of their study.

However, as access to the place of work can be difficult, paying travel and food expenses enables students from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate.

Internships

The CIPD’s guidance “Internships that Work” explains the situation:

“There are no laws specifically on paying interns, however there are rules for the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

If someone is expected to undertake work for any organisation, they are entitled to be paid the NMW – even if there is no written contract in place.

However, the issue of whether an intern classes as a ‘worker’ is made more complicated by the fact that, in some circumstances, they could instead be classed as ‘volunteers’ (who are under no obligation to perform work, have no contract or formal arrangement and have no expectation of and do not receive any reward for the work they do besides having their expenses reimbursed), in which case the NMW legislation does not apply. In short, if an intern is contributing to your company, has a list of duties and is working set hours then technically they should be paid the NMW”.

As this guide recommends that your interns do real work, it is therefore also recommended that companies pay their interns at least the minimum wage.

Further information:

Department for Business guidance on NMW and work experience >
Best Practice Guides
Common Best Practice Code for High-Quality Internships >
Business in the Community Work Inspiration Programme >
‘Not Just Making Tea’ by UKCES >

Intern Recruitment Sites
www.milkround.com >
www.topinternships.com >

Organisations working with young people
Construction Youth Trust >
Duke of Edinburgh’s Award >
Prince’s Trust – GET INTO programmes for disadvantaged >
Industrial Cadets >

CITB
CITB Experience Construction Programme >
CREST – CITB Curriculum Support >

Construction Careers Information
Go Construct >